

the world vs. WTO

round #2 in the battle for planet earth - our resistance will be as transnational as capital

Lowdown on the Showdown

By Steve AT,

Myself and a crew of people from Detroit and Lansing headed to Seattle to Shutdown the World Trade Organization's international conference, in what will be referred to as N30 from here on out. What follows is a basic summary of what took place. This will be very brief so some things will be left out, for lack of space. It was a very powerful week for all of us.

Meetings were held everyday before N30 since we arrived. They were sponsored by Direct Action Network (DAN) and they were critical to the success of the protests. There were all sorts of different trainings going on, civil disobedience, blockades, jail solidarity, etc. Here is also where the slice strategy was developed to spread the disruption of the conference all over the city.

There was also an on-going squat during the days up to N30. It was extremely well organized and received a lot of positive publicity, including there not allowing cops inside unless they left their guns outside. There was a lot of public support and they brought the housing issue to light.

Each day up to N30 there were various banner hangings, in addition to the meetings and trainings. On the first day of the conference, November 29th, there was a test

run march and demo that ran through the Capitol Hill neighborhood, which would be a critical area throughout the rest of the week. It was a spirited march with of a few thousand people. At the beginning there was a huge coordinated pageant with huge puppets with the "awake the sleeping giant" theme. During the march through Capitol Hill there were tons of puppets, and a performance by a multi-racial women's poetry and dance group. There also spirited mini demos against the Gap, for supporting sweatshop labor. No WTO graffiti went up on the Gap and various city busses. Earlier that day the conference was delayed numerous hours because there was evidence that there had been a security breach.

Later that night there was a demo against McDonald's downtown, sponsored by a group of militant French farmers, including Jose Bove, who drove his tractor thru a McDonald's in France. It was a very hype demo with some graffiti and window breaking. That night we settled early so we could get up nice and early for the big day.

N30 was here and we got downtown early, not knowing what to expect. At first things were very quiet. By 7:30 am there were very little signs of anything happening. The

marches from two different sites in the city were supposed to converge downtown, as well as the various blockades in the different slices of the city. By 8:15 everything had broke loose. Traffic into the city had been totally obstructed by various blockades, including a very effective one on the I-5 exit ramp. Within the next few minutes lockdowns took place all over downtown. Both the convention center and the Sheraton hotel were completely besieged, by literally thousands of people. The first signs of poor police organization became apparent. They were caught ill prepared, and it was obvious.

So much was going on in this period it is hard to characterize it. Dumpsters on wheels were being pulled out into the street. Graffiti was popping up all over. Hippies were playing drums and dancing. All sorts of people were forming tight blockades in front of important buildings. There was a huge blow-up whale blocking one street. There were anarchists everywhere with cell phones, radios, and gas masks. The conference was shut down in a matter of minutes. Delegates were locked in their hotels, including U.S. Trade representative Christine Barfshevsky. Delegates who had made it



Just Do It.

Lowdown on the Showdown continued...

into the convention center were locked in. Those that were stuck in the streets or violently broke through activist lines were often encircled by protesters that further thwarted their attempts to make it to meetings, that would not be happening that day. Finally an American demo was representing! There were probably twenty to thirty thousand people in the street.

Between 9-9:30 the police assault had begun. The first attack took place at the I-5 blockade. Shortly after that the police began to try to disperse activists near the Sheraton and Convention center, a task that they would not accomplish until after the State of Emergency had been declared. The police began shooting tear gas and rubber bullets at hundreds of non-violent protesters that would not disperse. While they broke up the crowd, and tried to establish veins for police traffic, overall they were very ineffective. The police spent the remainder of the day trying to maintain various police lines by beating people and shooting wooden and rubber bullets, as well as massive amounts of tear gas. While activist medics were well organized, the amounts of injuries were tremendous. There were even times when police drove motorcycles into people who were non-violently engaged in lockdowns, as well as cases of cops hitting people with barrels of loaded shotguns in the head.

At 11:11 am the Reclaim the Streets action took place and this is when the property destruction began en masse. I am not going to go into detail about this, since it is well covered between the interview and Black Block communiqué. One thing I will say is that it was really interesting to see a whole lot of older "non-violent" folks violently attack people who were engaging in dumpster moving and window breaking. Many were also more than willing to help facilitate state violence against activists they had disagreements with — pointing them out to the police.

Around noon the massive labor march began and flooded the streets, possibly doubling the activist numbers. While the "official sponsors" of the labor march tried to change the course of the march, the rank and file made sure that didn't happen, especially after the march had been delayed for hours. Many came up to the police lines and stuck around for the rest of the day.

Shortly after this there was a serious con-

frontation that remained a stand off for hours, at Fourth and Broad, I believe. The cops kept trying to move the activists back, and activists kept resisting. Finally activists made a large blockade out of dumpsters, and lit them on fire. It was overwhelming how much we were winning. It was also around this time that it was admitted publicly that the WTO conference had been cancelled for the day.

By two we toured the rest of downtown and saw all the broken windows and massive amounts of graffiti. The standoff from 9 am was still going on near the Sheraton



Quick thinking transformed dumpsters into blockade which blocked police attacks.

and Nike town. There were still tens of thousands of people in the street. Some looting took place of a Radio Shack, a cellular phone store, etc. Once again the liberals acted like fools — violently assaulting people who began looting, while chanting "this is a non-violent protest". I thought the police made it clear it was no longer a "non-violent protest".

Between 4 and 5 PM the "State of Civil Emergency" had been declared. The police spent the rest of the night trying to disperse the crowds. Many of the protesters were driven back to Capitol Hill, where street battles continued past midnight. Surprisingly the day ended with few arrests, around 30, of which many have since been dropped.

The next day the police would have their revenge. Thousands of people made their way downtown, and right away the tempo had changed. Police were grabbing people

off of buses that "looked like protesters". Protesters' signs were confiscated. The city had to be prepared for Clinton who flew in the night before. About a 5-block area had been declared a no-protest zone, although they were letting shoppers and business folks wander around at will. It was not long though before a 400-500 person march broke through the minimal zone police lines. A young man in a black mask was showing off the massive bruises on his leg from 4 rubber bullet shots. Moments later he was tackled, beaten, and arrested. After the groups entered the area it became apparent they were

surrounded.

Soon the cops began to prepare for massive arrests. Many empty busses arrived and it wasn't long before they were filled with 250 activists who had broken through the no-protest zone. This seemed to fuel people to continue to resist all day. Upon their arrest most of the people refused to get off the busses, maintaining a semi-autonomous zone on the busses — removing their handcuffs, communicating on cell-phones, sharing whatever was in their packs, pissing in a small hole in the bus.

The police continued the assault throughout the day. It was a full day of police rioting. People all over the city were being attacked. People shopping or working in the Capitol Hill neighborhood were facing a large brunt of the assault. There was also another labor march that was attacked with rubber bullets and tear gas. Throughout

the day more and more people became angry over the out of control police and joined protests in the street. Cops began using different weapons when they ran out of stock. They started using large wooden shotgun shells that were especially harmful. There was also an experimental nerve gas used that has had some long-term side effects in some of its victims.

Overall the police arrested over 600 people. Almost all refused to get off the busses, and were eventually taken off by force by riot police spraying tear gas. At this point nearly everyone participated in jail solidarity and refused to give their names upon processing. This made the job of the police detectives very difficult and has since resulted in nearly everyone getting their charges dropped. Many of those arrested did 3-4 days in jail. While this was going on there was incredible support from activists holding protests and vigils outside until all were released.

The end result was that we shut down the WTO conference for two critical days, helping to facilitate its failure. The police chief resigned, as well as numerous high-ranking officers. The City Prosecutor has since dropped most charges, but there are a number of felony cases that are in need of serious support. They are also selectively prosecuting between 30-40 misdemeanor cases just to "set an example". Please consider sending funds to help pay for the extensive legal costs for the defense of these activists.

An appeal for funds

There are about 40 people facing felony charges stemming from the Shutdown of the World Trade Organization and they need your support. Help them out by sending donations. Your support will help hire the good lawyers needed to keep these courageous people out of jail. We must win the fight and keep our friends out of jail and on the street.

Make checks payable to the **DAN Legal Team.**

DAN Legal Team, PO Box 95113, Seattle, WA 98145.

Contact Amanda Jarman at (206) 632-9482 or dan_legal@yahoo.com.

Why the WTO Sucks

The WTO only serves the interests of multinational corporations

The WTO is not a democratic institution, and yet its policies impact all aspects of social life. The WTO rules are written by and for corporations with inside access to the negotiations. For example, the US Trade Representative relies on its 17 "Industry Sector Advisory Committees" to provide input into trade negotiations. Citizen input by consumer, environmental, human rights and labor organizations is consistently ignored. Even requests for information are denied, and the proceedings are held in secret.

The WTO is killing people.

The WTO's fierce defense of intellectual property rights—patents, and copyrights comes at the expense of health and human lives. The organization's support for pharmaceutical companies against governments seeking to protect their people's health has had serious implications for places like sub-Saharan Africa, where 80 percent of the world's new AIDS cases are. The US government, on behalf of US companies, is trying to block developing countries' access to less expensive, generic, life-saving drugs. For example, the South African government has been threatened with a WTO challenge over proposed national health laws that



Over 500 were arrested for violating the 52 block "no protest zone." Three busses of the arrested refused to be brought into the jail. They held out for 10 hours!

would encourage the use of generic drugs, ban the practice of manufacturers offering economic incentives to doctors who prescribe their products and institute "parallel importing," which allows companies to import drugs from other countries where the drugs are cheaper.

The WTO tramples over labor and human rights.

The WTO has refused to address the impacts of free trade on labor rights, despite the fact that countries that actively enforce labor rights are disadvantaged by countries that consistently violate international labor conventions. Many developing countries, such as Mexico, contend that labor standards constitute a "barrier to free trade" for countries whose competitive advantage in the global economy is cheap labor. Potential solutions to labor and human rights abuses are blocked by the WTO, which has ruled that it is: 1) illegal for a government to ban a product based on the way it is produced (i.e. with child labor); and 2) governments cannot take into account the behavior of companies that do business with dictatorships.

The WTO is destroying the Environment

The WTO is being used by corporations to dismantle environmental protections, who call them barriers to trade. In 1993 the very first WTO panel ruled that a regulation of the US Clean Air Act, which required both domestic and foreign producers alike to produce cleaner gasoline, was illegal. Recently, the WTO declared illegal a provision of the Endangered Species Act that requires shrimp sold in the US to be caught with an inexpensive device that allows endangered sea turtles to escape. The WTO is currently negotiating an agreement that would eliminate tariffs on wood products, which would



The Labor March brought out over 20,000 rank and file unionists.

increase the demand for timber and escalate deforestation.

The WTO is increasing inequality

Free trade is not working for the majority of the world. During a the most recent period of rapid growth in global trade and investment—1960 to 1998—inequality worsened both internationally and within countries. The UN Development Program reports that the richest 20 percent of the world's population consume 86 percent of the world's resources while the poorest 80 percent consume just 14 percent. WTO rules have hastened these trends by opening up countries to foreign investment and thereby making it easier for production to go where the labor is cheapest and most easily exploited and environmental costs are low. This pulls down wages and environmental standards in developed countries who are having to compete globally.

Interview with a Black Bloc Participant

The following is an interview with an anarchist participant in the Seattle Shutdown the WTO demonstrations. We believe this interview displays some important observations about the protests and the many participants, as well as the future of revolutionary anarchist struggle. For security reasons the interview subject did not give their name.

Active Transformation (AT): First off what made you decide to go to Seattle?

Black Block (BB): I had a feeling it would be important. I remember reading about the WTO in an anarchist newspaper from Minneapolis called the Blast, probably 4 years ago...and it stuck with me as a pretty evil entity. I had not heard much of it since, until about a year before the Seattle demo. The various People's Global Action events, especially the June 18th demos against the G8, had been very inspiring. All the preparation for Nov. 30th seemed interesting. There was a sense from the beginning that it would be a mass event, even if not extremely militant. On the chance that it might be a massive protest against global capitalism, me and a few others decided to go.

I had no reason to believe it would be so successful at disrupting the WTO's ability to function or even exist, at this point.

AT: Why do you think the protests were so successful?

BB: I think this was probably the most important event for the American left in the last twenty-years. There have been large events, like the Gulf War protests, etc., but not that have been so diverse and interested in disrupting business as usual, and then being successful.

There were three main reasons the protests were so successful. The first reason was that there were hundreds of different organizations: labor, environmental, anarchist, students, women, anti-sweatshop - the whole spectrum. This alone didn't do it though. What made it powerful was that it was pretty understood this was not going to be a passive, stand in the street and give speeches, appeal to the masters, kinda demo. It was well understood by all that it was going to be about disrupting the conference - and that is a big step for the American movement.

The second reason it was so successful was that the strategy developed through the Direct Action Network meetings the entire week was anarchism in action. The plan developed was based on affinity groups, which are small clusters of people who know each other who have similar political goals or desires. What we did was divide the downtown area into pie slices, with the convention center as ground zero. Then, different affinity groups would take responsibility for different slices, and plan however they saw fit to cause disruption that would hinder the operation of the conference. This made police disruption utterly impossible. The cops could foresee very little since the strategy was so decentralized among closely knit groups.

The third, and most controversial reason, was that of the black block elevating the protest to a different extreme level. I am not saying that the black block was more radical or more politically advanced, but that the key to the success of the protest was the diversity of tactics, interrelating in a number of ways to cause disruption that was not policable.

AT: Could you talk a little bit about the anarchist black block?

BB: Before I do that I would like to mention that anarchists were not isolated in the black block. There were anarchists involved in every possible way. There were anarchist labor activists, puppeteers, non-violent

lockdown blockaders, marching musicians, medics, communication people, media people, whatever - as well as a group of about two hundred in black masks who had prepared, also in affinity groups, to do as much symbolic physical damage to multinational capitalism as possible.



Protestors take a few steps back from the clouds of poison gas passed by cops.

I have seen black blocks used in protests in the U.S. a lot but never so successfully. It is important to note that the black block was not the result of some conspiracy. It too happened quite spontaneously, with people who came from all over the country - with similar desires.

The day started with black block people in small groups making impromptu blockades with whatever was handy in the streets - dumpsters, newspaper boxes, warning tape, planters, among other things. In addition to this the black clad anarchists supplemented attempts to make human blockades at the Sheraton hotel, where many delegates were staying, and across the street at the convention center. Where the pacifist lines were weak, the black block would fill in and create a second line, further away from the police. They would also surround delegates in the street and force them, non-violently, to alter course away from the hotels or the convention center. At one point a delegate pulled a handgun on protesters, at which point the protesters hit the deck, and the delegate was escorted through the police line, gun still in hand.

One false line that is being pushed by the mainstream media, as well as a lot of underground media was that the violent police response was somehow caused by the property destruction. I would like to state that the police violence had begun by 9 am, in response to very successful street and doorway blockades, way before the window breaking began shortly after "Reclaim the Streets" at 11 am. They began with tear gas, rubber bullets, etc. The first window broken actually was when a tear gas grenade was shot through a store window.

There had been minor property "transformation" throughout the morning, and even the day before. It was mostly graffiti - on buses, cop cars, the Sheraton, etc. The day before Nov. 30th a protest at McDonalds sponsored by French farmers, caused minor destruction to windows, etc. It should have been a sign of what was to come.

When the large-scale window breaking began it was quite awe-inspiring. All of a sudden people we were walking with pulled out all sorts of tools: nail pullers, hammers, crowbars. They then proceeded to very quickly knock windows out of every bank, upper class or multi-national clothing store. I even saw a woman smashing an ATM machine with a sledgehammer. I was afraid at any moment a police tactical team would break through the crowd and violently assault the Black Block.

AT: On 60 Minutes they put most of the emphasis on the anarchists from Eugene,

OR. Do you think they are responsible for what happened?

BB: While I know they were there, the black block had a few hundred people in it. I know there were people there from all over the country. The Eugene people have just been

very open about violent demo tactics. The 60 minutes episode really does disfavor to revolutionary anarchism, in that it portrays all anarchists through the eyes and mouths of the primitivists - who in my mind make up a small minority of anarchist activists. The primitivists put anti-technology and environmentalism at the forefront of their politics, and downplay, in my opinion, the real social and class struggle that has to take place. And then to draw a line between the Unabomber and anarchism has serious marginalizing consequences.

AT: Could you talk a little bit about the police response to the events in Seattle?

BB: I would say that they messed up big time, way to our advantage. The first day they thought they would be effective by undermining what they thought to be our strategy of filling up the jails. They planned to make no arrests and just use plenty of non-lethal force. That non-lethal force just strengthened people's resolve to disrupt the conference. It also transformed a lot of people to move away from strict pacifism. It is easier to remain a pacifist if you've never felt the force of the state. When their strategy failed all they could do was try and maintain the police lines, which they had a lot of trouble with.

By the end of the first day a State of Civil Emergency had been declared and there was a lot of criticism of the more destructive activists. The police and the city had an opportunity to turn things around for themselves and they blew it. The cops went on a rampage for 24 hours indiscriminately attacking people all over the city. While they arrested a lot of activists for civil disobedience, the brunt of the force was directed against non-activist civilians. The police were already under a lot of heat for mishandling the day before. With the ensuing day of police rioting they had turned our struggle into a much more popular struggle, and the cops lost all respect.

AT: How do you view the other groups that were out there, like the environmental and labor groups?

BB: They were all critical to the success of the demonstration. It was the barrage from all sides that led to the all consuming critique that has spread out across the country. Before Nov. 30th next to no one has heard of the WTO. And now almost everyone has heard of it and has a bad taste in their mouth about it. The coalition that shut down the WTO ministerial was extremely diverse and that is what made it powerful.

Even within the categories of labor and environmental groups there is a huge diversity. You go from Earth First! to the Sierra Club, and from the AFL-CIO to the Longshoremen. While the more liberal groups made it a mass event, the more radical groups transformed the day into a celebration of anti-capitalist disruption. The Longshoremen and Sheetmetal workers both broke with the labor marshals' plans to divert the demos away from the action downtown. The Sheetmetal workers came and stood against the police lines and faced tear gas with the rest of us. Other unions did the same the next day.

AT: What meaning does Seattle have for the larger movement?

BB: I can only begin to answer this in a brief context. First off it provides evidence of at least two really important things: that there is a movement and that we can win. The graffiti on walls all over the city stated clearly "We Are Winning!". By that evening when the state of civil emergency was declared the downtown had been completely altered - it felt like a revolution was underway - it was really powerful. I know that people came back to their cities totally energized to carry on the struggle.

We need these boosts. So often it feels like there is no hope for a better future. That has changed drastically for me. Another thing was that in talking with people over the next couple of days I got the impression that a good majority of the people who came out were new, young activists. That for me is really exciting. I am sure they have been totally empowered by the experience and will make our movement entirely more vibrant.

I think it is important that we build on the foundation of Seattle. We need to take advantage of this chance to dialogue between different groups. The chance for communication between labor, anarchist, and environmental groups is open to us all to learn and develop stronger ties. We must continue to push for strategies that challenge the power of business and state, not appeal to it.

We also need to root our struggles in the communities we live in and around issues of oppression and injustice that are everyday issues to people all around us. There has been a large critique among people of color that the largely white anti-WTO protesters mobilize against injustice around the world - but fail to connect with, prioritize, or even attempt to understand important struggles going on right here. That is one of the critical lessons we need to take to heart.

AT: So what can we look forward to next?

BB: Besides the plethora of local issues and projects we can get involved in there are a few potentially interesting things on the near horizon. In April the International Money Fund is having an international conference in D.C. It is questionably the WTO's bigger, eviler brother. People's Global Action has also called for the next big international day of action against global capitalism to be on Mayday, May 1st this year. There are already plans in the works for events in Seattle, Detroit, Phoenix, London, and Shutdown Wallstreet in New York City, as well as a number of other cities around the world.

One critical thing to remember is that there are a number of people facing charges from the Seattle events, some of which are very serious. It is critical to the growth of a healthy radical movement that we do the necessary legal support to free these folks and get them back out in the streets with us.



the Black Bloc Communiqué

Report from one section of the anarchist black bloc during Seattle's N30

On November 30, several groups of individuals in black bloc attacked various corporate targets in downtown Seattle. Among them were (to name just a few):

—**Fidelity Investment** (major investor in Occidental Petroleum, the bane of the U'wa tribe in Columbia)

—**Bank of America, US Bancorp, Key Bank and Washington Mutual Bank** (financial institutions key in the expansion of corporate repression)

—**Old Navy, Banana Republic and the GAP** (as Fisher family businesses, rapers of Northwest forest lands and sweatshop laborers)

—**NikeTown and Levi's** (whose overpriced products are made in sweatshops)

—**McDonald's** (slave-wage fast-food peddlers responsible for destruction of tropical rainforests for grazing land and slaughter of animals)

—**Starbucks** (peddlers of an addictive substance whose products are harvested at below-poverty wages by farmers who are forced to destroy their own forests in the process)

—**Warner Bros.** (media monopolists)

—**Planet Hollywood** (for being Planet Hollywood)

This activity lasted for over 5 hours and involved the breaking of storefront windows and doors and defacing of facades. Slingshots, newspaper boxes, sledge hammers, mallets, crowbars and nail-pullers were used to strategically destroy corporate property and gain access (one of the three targeted Starbucks and Niketown were looted). Eggs filled with glass etching solution, paint-balls and spray-paint were also used.

The black bloc was a loosely organized cluster of affinity groups and individuals who roamed around downtown, pulled this way by a vulnerable and significant storefront and that way by the sight of a police formation. Unlike the vast majority of activists who were pepper-sprayed, tear-gassed and shot at with rubber bullets on several occasions, most of our section of the black bloc escaped serious injury by remaining constantly in motion and avoiding engagement with the police. We buddied up, kept tight and watched each others' backs. Those attacked by federal thugs were un-arrested by quick-thinking and organized members of the black bloc. The sense of solidarity was awe-inspiring.

THE PEACE POLICE

Unfortunately, the presence and persistence of "peace police" was quite disturbing. On at least 6 separate occasions, so-called "non-violent" activists physically attacked individuals who targeted corporate property. Some even went so far as to stand in front of the Niketown super store and tackle and shove the black bloc away. Indeed, such self-described "peace-keepers" posed a much greater threat to individuals in the black bloc than the notoriously violent uniformed "peace-keepers" sanctioned by the state (undercover officers have even used the cover of the activist peace-keepers to ambush those who engage in corporate property destruction).

RESPONSE TO THE BLACK BLOC

Response to the black bloc has highlighted some of the contradictions and internal oppressions of the "nonviolent activist" community. Aside from the obvious hypocrisy of those who engaged in violence against black-clad and masked people (many of whom were harassed despite the fact that they never engaged in property destruction), there is the racism of privileged activists who can afford to ignore the violence perpetrated against the bulk of society and the natural world in the name of private property rights. Window-smashing has engaged and inspired many of the most oppressed members of Seattle's community more than any giant puppets or sea turtle costumes ever could (not to disparage the effectiveness of

those tools in other communities).

TEN MYTHS ABOUT THE BLACK BLOC
Here's a little something to dispel the myths that have been circulating about the N30 black bloc:

1. "They are all a bunch of Eugene anarchists." While a few may be anarchists from Eugene, we hail from all over the United States, including Seattle. In any case, most of us are familiar with local issues in Seattle (for instance, the recent occupation of downtown by some of the most nefarious of multinational retailers).

2. "They are all followers of John Zerzan."

geted direct action against corporate interests.

7. "They just want to fight." This is pretty absurd, and it conveniently ignores the eagerness of "peace police" to fight us. Of all the groups engaging in direct action, the black bloc was perhaps the least interested in engaging the authorities and we certainly had no interest in fighting with other anti-WTO activists (despite some rather strong disagreements over tactics).

8. "They are a chaotic, disorganized and opportunistic mob." While many of us could surely spend days arguing over what "cha-

Top Ten Slogans, Chants and Statements at the WTO Rebellion

10) We're Winning

9) "Whether Or Not You Believe Property Destruction Is Violence, That Can Be Debated, But If You've Got A Problem With Property Destruction You Should Leave This Area Now!"

-Impromptu Anonymous Newspaper-Box Speaker, (11:11 Black Block 11/30)

8) Arm The Home!

7) Because of the WTO I don't Have A Job anymore But at least Now I can Buy Cheap Guns from China!

6) Hippie Chick: "Let's Be Silent For A Moment For All The People Who Are Suffering" Xicana: "No, We've Been Silent For Too Long"

5) This Is What Democracy Looks Like!

4) Wake Up, Rise Up!

3) If You Think The WTO Is Bad, Wait Til You Hear About Capitalism

2) I Don't Know What A WTO Is But I Fucking Hate Rich People

1) We Win

A lot of rumors have been circulating that we are followers of John Zerzan, an anarcho-primitivist author from Eugene who advocates property destruction. While some of us may appreciate his writings and analyses, he is in no sense our leader, directly, indirectly, philosophically or otherwise.

3. "The mass public squat is the headquarters of the anarchists who destroyed property on November 30th." In reality, most of the people in the "Autonomous Zone" squat are residents of Seattle who have spent most of their time since its opening on the 28th in the squat. While they may know of one-another, the two groups are not co-extensive and in no case could the squat be considered the headquarters of people who destroyed property.

4. "They escalated situations on the 30th, leading to the tear-gassing of passive, non-violent protesters." To answer this, we need only note that tear-gassing, pepper-spraying and the shooting of rubber bullets all began before the black blocs (as far as we know) started engaging in property destruction. In addition, we must resist the tendency to establish a causal relationship between police repression and protest in any form, whether it involved property destruction or not. The police are charged with protecting the interests of the wealthy few and the blame for the violence cannot be placed upon those who protest those interests.

5. Conversely: "They acted in response to the police repression." While this might be a more positive representation of the black bloc, it is nevertheless false. We refuse to be misconstrued as a purely reactionary force. While the logic of the black bloc may not make sense to some, it is in any case a pro-active logic.

6. "They are a bunch of angry adolescent boys." Aside from the fact that it belies a disturbing ageism and sexism, it is false. Property destruction is not merely macho rabble-rousing or testosterone-laden angst release. Nor is it displaced and reactionary anger. It is strategically and specifically tar-

getic means, we were certainly not disorganized. The organization may have been fluid and dynamic, but it was tight. As for the charge of opportunism, it would be hard to imagine who of the thousands in attendance didn't take advantage of the opportunity created in Seattle to advance their agenda. The question becomes, then, whether or not we helped create that opportunity and most of us certainly did (which leads us to the next myth):

9. "They don't know the issues" or "they aren't activists who've been working on this." While we may not be professional activists, we've all been working on this convergence in Seattle for months. Some of us did work in our home-towns and others came to Seattle months in advance to work on it. To be sure, we were responsible for many hundreds of people who came out on the streets on the 30th, only a very small minority of which had anything to do with the black bloc.

Most of us have been studying the effects of the global economy, genetic engineering, resource extraction, transportation, labor practices, elimination of indigenous autonomy, animal rights and human rights and we've been doing activism on these issues for many years. We are neither ill-informed nor unexperienced.

10. "Masked anarchists are anti-democratic and secretive because they hide their identities." Let's face it (with or without a mask)—we aren't living in a democracy right now. If this week has not made it plain enough, let us remind you—we are living in a police state. People tell us that if we really think that we're right, we wouldn't be hiding behind masks. "The truth will prevail" is the assertion. While this is a fine and noble goal, it does not jive with the present reality. Those who pose the greatest threat to the interests of Capital and State will be persecuted. Some pacifists would have us accept this persecution gleefully. Others would tell us that it is a worthy sacrifice. We are not so morose. Nor do we feel we have the privilege to accept persecution as a sacrifice:

persecution to us is a daily inevitability and we treasure our few freedoms. To accept incarceration as a form of flattery betrays a large amount of "first world" privilege. We feel that an attack on private property is necessary if we are to rebuild a world which is useful, healthful and joyful for everyone. And this despite the fact that hypertrophied private property rights in this country translate into felony charges for any property destruction over \$250.

MOTIVATIONS OF THE BLACK BLOC

The primary purpose of this communiqué is to diffuse some of the aura of mystery that surrounds the black bloc and make some of its motivations more transparent, since our masks cannot be.

ON THE VIOLENCE OF PROPERTY

We contend that property destruction is not a violent activity unless it destroys lives or causes pain in the process. By this definition, private property—especially corporate private property—is itself infinitely more violent than any action taken against it.

Private property should be distinguished from personal property. The latter is based upon use while the former is based upon trade. The premise of personal property is that each of us has what s/he needs. The premise of private property is that each of us has something that someone else needs or wants. In a society based on private property rights, those who are able to accrue more of what others need or want have greater power. By extension, they wield greater control over what others perceive as needs and desires, usually in the interest of increasing profit to themselves.

Advocates of "free trade" would like to see this process to its logical conclusion: a network of a few industry monopolists with ultimate control over the lives of the everyone else. Advocates of "fair trade" would like to see this process mitigated by government regulations meant to superficially impose basic humanitarian standards. As anarchists, we despise both positions. Private property—and capitalism, by extension—is intrinsically violent and repressive and cannot be reformed or mitigated. Whether the power of everyone is concentrated into the hands of a few corporate heads or diverted into a regulatory apparatus charged with mitigating the disasters of the latter, no one can be as free or as powerful as they could be in a non-hierarchical society.

When we smash a window, we aim to destroy the thin veneer of legitimacy that surrounds private property rights. At the same time, we exorcize that set of violent and destructive social relationships which has been imbued in almost everything around us. By "destroying" private property, we convert its limited exchange value into an expanded use value. A storefront window becomes a vent to let some fresh air into the oppressive atmosphere of a retail outlet (at least until the police decide to tear-gas a nearby road blockade). A newspaper box becomes a tool for creating such vents or a small blockade for the reclamation of public space or an object to improve one's vantage point by standing on it. A dumpster becomes an obstruction to a phalanx of rioting cops and a source of heat and light. A building facade becomes a message board to record brainstorm ideas for a better world.

After N30, many people will never see a shop window or a hammer the same way again. The potential uses of an entire cityscape have increased a thousand-fold. The number of broken windows pales in comparison to the number broken spells—spells cast by a corporate hegemony to lull us into forgetfulness of all the violence committed in the name of private property rights and of all the potential of a society without them. Broken windows can be boarded up (with yet more waste of our forests) and eventually replaced, but the shattering of assumptions will hopefully persist for some time to come.

Against Capital and State,
the ACME Collective "Peasant Revolt!"
Disclaimer: these observations and analyses are those of only the ACME Collective.